

AIDS Day enlightens, offers hope for cure



Tish Ryan shares her experiences working with AIDS victims. Her brother died of the disease in 1985. Staff photo by Lee Hong Yap

AIDS:

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which was different than in the past. Ryan became involved with support groups after her son died of AIDS at age 32 in 1985.

"The road has obsessed me ever since. I am addicted," she said. Ryan also works with the HIV Task Force at the University of Idaho.

On the WSU campus, Ryan said there is not much being done in the way of AIDS education other than SIRC.

"Something needs to be done," she said. "It needs to come from the university."

Sam Couch, another panel member, said young women are at the greatest risk of being infected with HIV. Couch's goal was in the presentation was also to reach just one person.

"You can only change one human being at a time," Couch said.

Couch has worked with the Palouse AIDS Network and for the AIDS Education Project in Denver. He also has seen many friends die of the disease.

"For many young men and women, it's an old people's disease," he said. "But it is starting all over again."

After a few months with the AIDS Education Project, Couch said they started to see the numbers of AIDS cases decline because the message was getting across. Now, however, the numbers are increasing, he said.

A professor from UI was the third panelist. Maryanne Judges' brother has been infected with HIV since 1982.

"I can still remember very clearly thinking that my brother has this gay cancer," Judge said of the night her brother got sick in 1982. "He didn't want anyone to know."

Three years ago, Judge's brother told their entire family. Up until then only Judge knew.

"I was able to stuff my grief," she said. "But it is extremely sad."

The most traumatic effect HIV has on a family, Judge said, is the feeling of helplessness. Judge said it is extremely hard for her father to watch his wife, daughters and son grieve because he can not do anything about it.

"The grief is always there," she said. "It

doesn't get any easier."

Judge urged audience members to have compassion for those with the virus and their families.

"It is so easy to think we are always going to be here," she said. "They need compassion."

Before the panel discussion began Ryan played a video entitled "Close Enough to Touch" which presents the lives of three people living with AIDS.

Two of the victims were a mother and her daughter. The mother, Joyce, contracted the disease through sexual intercourse with her husband who had been unknowingly affected. Joyce then passed the virus on to her daughter through birth.

"(AIDS) is real, it effects everyone," Joyce said on the video. Her daughter died in late August.

Patrick, the other victim, contracted the virus in 1979 through sexual activity and had full blown AIDS at the time of the video.

"None of us have any guarantees, all we have is this moment," he said in the video. Patrick also has died.

New drug tests well in primates

By Kiantha Shaddock

Contributing Writer

Monkeys may have helped find a cure for AIDS. On World AIDS Day, Friday, research scientist Kathy Follis will speak on the possible breakthrough AIDS drug on Friday at noon in the CUB Cascade Room.

She is one of the doctors at the University of Washington Research Center who started experimenting last year with the drug Phosphonylmepoxypropyl Adenine (PMPA).

"(This drug) has completely inhibited the animals from becoming infected," Follis said.

Thirty-five monkeys have been used in her study. Ten monkeys in the control group were infected with the Simianimmunodeficiency Virus (SIV), the primate version of HIV,

"(This drug) has completely inhibited the animals from becoming infected."

Kathy Follis
AIDS researcher

which leads to AIDS. The non-control group was also infected with SIV, but after treatment with PMPA, none became infected with AIDS.

"We've followed the (non-control) group for over a year and there's nothing to indi-

cate they're infected," Follis said.

If PMPA continues to show its efficacy, Follis said health care workers could be the first protected.

"(Those) who accidentally become exposed to HIV could start the treatment therapy," she said. "There is also a possibility of using PMPA in combination drug therapy."

This drug is not available for human use until it is subjected to clinical trials.

"(Government agencies) hope to test it after the first of the year," she said.

Unfortunately, she said, PMPA does not work on every life stage of the virus.

"This particular compound works on the reverse transcriptase enzyme of the virus," Follis said.

Therefore, she said, it is not for people or monkeys who have full-blown AIDS.

"At that stage, the infection has discriminated to lots of different parts of the body," she said.

Symptoms infected monkeys show include a decline in CD4+ T-cells, transient rash, an increase in the size of the lymph nodes and weight loss.

"They also develop a wasting syndrome just like in humans," Follis said.

Not only does PMPA appear to effectively stopped AIDS, but the drug also is non-toxic, unlike AZT, which causes red cell depletion.

"Many people taking AZT end up having blood transfusions," Follis said.

As the virus mutates, AZT works against the mutagen.

"It seems as though resistance builds up so the virus becomes totally resistant to AZT," she said. "We're hoping that will not be the case with this new compound."

The 57-week study is being hailed by national experts as the most promising in AIDS research.

"So far, we have not seen (resistance to PMPA)," Follis said. "None of the animals have become infected, so we haven't had the chance to see it."

PMPA treatments for monkeys started as early as four hours after exposure to SIV.

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New York quietly calling for recall of condoms

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York is quietly recalling thousands of defective condoms sent to community organizations cross the state for distribution to safe-sex programs.

Complaints about leaks and insufficient spermicide in the batch of 3 million Chinese-made Olympus brand condoms started surfacing soon after they were distributed last summer. Health Department spokeswoman Diane Mathis said Thursday.

The condoms were issued to 250 organizations to give to poor people to prevent AIDS.

Mathis said that she wasn't sure how many were distributed to the public but that most were held by the programs when several people complained about the leaks.

The state contacted all of the organizations and asked for the condoms back. It also urged them to contact people who received the condoms.

"I don't know why the decision was made not to make a public announcement," said Joyce Holly, education director for the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York, one of the groups that received the condoms.

The Health Department didn't see the need for a general announcement because the condoms were distributed to a select group and were not sold publicly, Mathis said.

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